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SDS1000

Simmons SDS1000 And Rack

It seems that, every year about this time, I'm reviewing yet another new Simmons product. And every year, Simmons continues to outdo itself. The newest addition to the Simmons line is the *SDS1000*, which could be termed a stripped-down *SDS9* (see MD: Nov. '85).

The *SDS1000* is a five-piece pad set with a rack-mountable control brain, capable of storing a total of ten different drumkits: five factory ROM preset kits, and another five user-programmable kits. All drum sounds are created in the same manner as in the *SDS9*: The bass drum is software-generated, the toms are analog, and the snare is a digital PROM. The *SDS1000* has four on-board selectable/variable snare sounds: Tight, Rock, Gated Ambient, and Electric. These can be modified quite a bit when programming your own kits. The pads are of the recent series. The small ones have floating surfaces, while the bass pad is piston-loaded at the impact area. (You should use a very soft beater, so as not to get a loud acoustic impact sound.)

Since the five factory kits are in ROM, they cannot be modified, but there are another five kits that can be. The *SDS1000* comes with the user spaces programmed with kits. If you choose to program your own in their place, they're lost for good. (There is no facility for tape dumping or loading.) The available parameter controls for the *SDS1000* are: Filter, Pitch, Bend, Decay, Noise/Tone Balance, and Click. It should be pointed out that not all five voices can use all these controls. For example, the Filter control will work with your tom-tom voices, but not with snare or bass.

As on the *SDS9*, there is a programmable "second skin" option for the toms, which adds in a sub-harmonic tone, giving an approximation of a double-headed drum sound. The same knob, when used with the snare, is the selector switch for all

four snare samples. Rotating the control allows switching between the PROM sounds. The sampled sound you want can then be modified by using Pitch, Bend, and Decay. By the way, the snare pad itself is only single-trigger, so the *SDS1000* will not produce rimshot sounds, like the *SDS9*.

Each drum voice has individual pad sensitivity and level controls. There are also controls for master mono and left-right stereo levels. A headphone jack is included as well. The rear of the *SDS1000* has separate "A" inputs and outputs, as well as stereo/mono master outputs and a footswitch socket. An optional footswitch connects directly to the Select button, allowing kit selection to be made while playing.

Programming the *SDS1000* is remarkably simple: Select the kit number you want via the "Select" button. (The burnt-in factory kits are numbered 1 to 5; the programmable kits are also 1 to 5, but have a *dot* after the number in the display). Pressing another button enters the Program mode, and you then select the voice you want to program, and make use of the manual parameter controls. You can then, at the push of a button, store your new kit in memory, either temporarily or permanently. An LED will light up when the unit is in Program mode, and each voice has its own selection LED. *Easy!*

Not so easy is the process by which kits are selected. When selecting, you have to cycle through all the factory kits to get to the user kits. If you're in a hurry, this may be a bit inconvenient, since to go from F1 (factory kit #1) to U5 (user kit #5) takes nine separate pushes of the button. Another complaint I have is the lack of contrasting position markers on the parameter dials, which makes reading the dials very difficult in dim lighting!

Simmons does not include the *SDS9*'s time-saving "Copy Tom" feature, and, as far as I can tell, it's pretty impossible to

change the snare PROM. The *SDSWOO* does not have onboard MIDI capability, but it can be linked with Simmons' new *TMI* (Trigger to MIDI Interface). This would then allow it to drive the new *SDE* percussion voice expander or any other MIDI-controlled devices.

As always, Simmons' sounds are very good. If there's something you don't like, you can always form your own preset sounds in the user section. The unit is quite capable of producing many of the now "popular" drum sounds. (It is rather odd that the bass drum in the factory preset kits never changes. I would think that an "ambient" snare would call for a companion "ambient" bass drum! Oh well . . .)

The *SDS1000* retails at only \$999, which, I think, is quite a bargain, considering the sound quality and quantity. Look for these kits to be popping up everywhere!

Simmons Rack

Simmons now manufactures its own *Rack* for mounting its pads. Like an *Erector* set, you build it up from black steel piping, and connect it with black plastic T-joints. The bass drum pad does not need spurs, as it is also held upright in the *Rack*, making for an extremely sleek setup. The *Rack* is very sturdy and only measures 37" across, which is enough room for at least four pad holder clamps, and maybe even a cymbal holder or two hanging from the pad arms. All connections and holder clamps are drumkey adjusted, and the whole thing tears down to pack in a canvas carrying bag. The retail price of \$215.00 includes four tom arms. Also, if you want to mount the *SDS1000* brain closer to you than on a separate 19" rack cabinet, Simmons makes a *Rack* extension arm, plus a holder tray to mount the brain onto the *Rack* frame. Check with your dealer about availability and price for that option.

